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2 September 1955

[Redacted]
Copy No. 101

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

DOCUMENT NO. 2
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 15 JAN 1980 REVIEWER: [Redacted]

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Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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State Dept. review completed

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Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A002200020001-4

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1. EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI SITUATION

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Israeli foreign minister Sharett told Ambassador Lawson on 1 September that Israel will "take no action now" and that strict orders will be given to this effect, provided there are no "acts of hostility" by Egypt. Sharett defined such acts as shooting across the border, mining, and sabotage.

The foreign minister hoped this message would be conveyed to Cairo as well as to Washington, adding that UN truce chief Burns had already been given a similar message.

Sharett said he did not yet know how his formula would be applied to the Egyptian raiders still operating in Israel.

Comment

The tone of an Egyptian broadcast on 1 September, which was evidently made after receipt of Sharett's message, suggests that the Nasr regime may now be preparing public opinion for a "truce with honor" rather than for an Egyptian counter-attack. Other reports, however, including one of an incident on the Israeli-Syrian border, indicate that the situation is still explosive.

2. USSR OFFERS MINOR TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS TO JAPAN

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[Redacted]

Soviet ambassador Malik told Japanese delegate Matsumoto on 30 August that Moscow had decided to acknowledge Japan's right to Shikotan and the Habomai Islands, according to an official of the Japanese embassy in London. Malik added, however, that the USSR could not agree to return other former Japanese territories, or to recognize the right of non-riparian powers to navigate the Sea of Japan.

The Japanese embassy official implied that he believed a Soviet concession on navigation rights in the Sea of Japan might lead to the normalization of relations and the immediate return of approximately 1,300 Japanese detainees.

Comment Moscow apparently has responded to Tokyo's strong insistence that Japan has a special historical claim to small islands of the Habomai group and Shikotan. The USSR probably considers that it has now made adequate concessions to save face for the Japanese government and may insist that the next move come from the Japanese.

Freedom of navigation on the Sea of Japan has been one of Tokyo's minimum demands, and this question may become one of the most difficult yet faced in the negotiations.

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